

*In the Circuit Court for Lawrence County, Alabama*

*Thirty-Sixth Judicial Circuit*

*State of Alabama*

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER REGARDING  
MARCH 13, 2020 AND MARCH 15, 2020  
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS  
ENTERED BY THE SUPREME COURT OF ALABAMA**

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the Supreme Court of Alabama, the Honorable Chief Justice Tom Parker, presiding, entered the ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER SUSPENDING ALL IN-PERSON COURT PROCEEDINGS FOR THE NEXT THIRTY DAYS, IN RE: COVID-19 PANDEMIC EMERGENCY RESPONSE, (“the Order”);

WHEREAS, on March 15, 2020, the Supreme Court of Alabama, the Honorable Chief Justice Tom Parker, presiding, entered the ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2 PERTAINING TO THE SUSPENSION OF ALL IN-PERSON COURT PROCEEDINGS FOR THE NEXT THIRTY DAYS, (“Order No. 2”);

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Order, “[a]ll in- person proceedings in all state and local courts in Alabama, including, but not limited to, proceedings in the circuit court, district court (including cases on the small claims docket) , juvenile court, municipal court, probate court, and appellate courts, are suspended beginning Monday, March 16, 2020 through Thursday, April 16, 2020,” subject to certain specified exceptions;

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Order, enumerated exceptions (“the Exceptions”) to the suspension of in-person proceedings, are as follows:

1. Proceedings necessary to protect constitutional rights of criminal defendants, including bond- related matters and plea agreements for incarcerated individuals.
2. Civil and criminal jury trials that are in progress as of March 13, 2020.
3. Proceedings related to protection from abuse.
4. Proceedings related to emergency child custody and protection orders .
5. Department of Human Resources emergency matters related to child protection.
6. Proceedings related to petitions for temporary injunctive relief .
7. Proceedings related to emergency mental health orders.

8. Proceedings related to emergency protection of elderly or vulnerable persons.
9. Proceedings directly related to the COVID- 19 public health emergency.
10. Any emergent proceeding as needed by law enforcement;

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Order, this undersigned presiding judge of this judicial circuit is “authorized to determine the manner in which in-person court proceedings for the exceptions listed above are to be conducted.” Further, the Order stated that “[a]ny permitted in-court proceedings shall be limited to attorneys, parties, witnesses, security officers, and other necessary persons, as determined by the trial judge”;


NOW, BE IT ORDERED by the Court as follows:

- 1) All State Court Offices in the Lawrence County Judicial and Administrative Center shall maintain regular business operations, required by the Rules of Court and applicable statutes, subject to the exceptions set out herein.
- 2) The circuit, district and probate court judges shall maintain complete discretion over the management of cases assigned to them, including the authority to conduct in-person hearings in cases that involve one or more of the Exceptions. However, in-person hearings in cases NOT involving of the Exceptions are explicitly prohibited by the Order and may not be conducted until April 17, 2020.
- 3) It shall be the responsibility of individual judges to identify those cases that involve one of the Exceptions, and to enter appropriate orders in such cases, including setting them for in-person hearings.
- 4) When a judge has set an in-person hearing, the only persons permitted in the courtroom are the parties, the attorneys, court personnel, and persons whose presence is deemed necessary by the judge.
- 5) In cases not involving one of the Exceptions, the judges are encouraged to continue court operations to the extent reasonably possible, including using available technologies where communication and interaction may be conducted remotely, such as videoconferencing, teleconferencing, and related technologies.
- 6) The following persons shall not be permitted to enter courtrooms, court offices, the jury lounge, or any other secure area serving the circuit, district and probate courts, without the expressed prior permission of the appropriate judge or the Clerk of the Circuit Court:

- a) Persons who have traveled to any of the following countries within the fourteen (14) days prior to their attempt to enter the restricted areas: ITALY, IRAN, SOUTH KOREA, or CHINA
- b) Persons who reside or have had close contact with someone who has traveled to one of the above areas within the fourteen day period;
- c) Persons under official quarantine or who have been asked to self-quarantine by any hospital or health agency or any medical health professional; and
- d) Persons who have been diagnosed with or have had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or their families.
- 7) The court security personnel shall take reasonable steps to ensure compliance with the above.
- 8) The doors to the circuit courtroom shall remain locked from entrance by the public and persons shall be allowed in the courtroom only with the expressed permission of court personnel or court security personnel consistent with the terms of this order.
- 9) Pursuant to Order No. 2, the Order and the instant order have “no effect on out- of- court activities in civil cases, including, but not limited to, depositions and mediations. Such out- of- court activities should be evaluated on a case- by- case basis, and [the Supreme Court and this court encourage] all parties and attorneys to work together to implement appropriate social-distancing practices. Any dispute about an out- of- court activity related to a pending case should be directed to the court that is adjudicating the case.”

It is FURTHER ORDERED that copies of this Order be spread upon the minutes of this court and transmitted to the offices affected thereby, to the Lawrence County Commission, to the Sheriff of Lawrence County, and to the Administrative Office of Courts;

DONE AND ORDERED, this 15th day of March, 2020,



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MARK A. CHAFFIN  
Presiding Circuit Judge  
36<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit